

# Woman's Suffrage Timeline



Lucretia Mott

## July 19-20, 1848

The first women's rights convention in the United States is held in Seneca Falls, New York. The idea for the convention arises spontaneously out of a discussion among Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and three other women over tea. Many participants sign a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" that outlines the main issues and goals for the emerging women's movement. Thereafter, women's rights meetings are held on a regular basis.

## 1850

Amelia Jenks Bloomer launches the dress reform movement with a costume bearing her name. The Bloomer costume was later abandoned by many suffragists who feared it detracted attention from more serious women's rights issues.

## \*1850-51\*

Robert Dale Owen fights (unsuccessfully) on behalf of women's rights at the constitutional convention held in Indianapolis.

## \*October 1851\*

Hoosier women, including abolitionist Amanda Way, hold a women's rights convention in Dublin, Indiana. A year later, at a meeting in Richmond, Indiana, the Indiana Woman's Rights Association is created.

## 1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which rapidly becomes a bestseller. Lucretia Mott writes *Discourse on Woman*, arguing that the apparent inferiority of women can be attributed to their inferior educational opportunities.

## \*1859\*

The Indiana Woman's Rights Association formally presents a petition to the Indiana General Assembly seeking equal property rights for women and also seeks an amendment to the state constitution granting women the right to vote.

## 1861 to 65

The American Civil War disrupts suffrage activity as women, North and South, divert their energies to "war work." The war itself, however, serves as a "training ground," as women gain important organizational and occupational skills they will later use in postbellum organizational activity.

## 1866

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony



Lucy Stone

## 1869

The women's rights movement splits into two factions as a result of disagreements over the Fourteenth and soon-to-be-passed Fifteenth Amendments. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the more radical, New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organize the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which is centered in Boston. In this same year, the Wyoming territory is organized with a woman suffrage provision.



Susan B. Anthony

## 1872

Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, demanding a ballot; she is turned away.

### **\*April 1873\***

The Indianapolis Woman Suffrage Society is formed.

## 1874

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is founded by Annie Wittenmyer. With Frances Willard at its head (1876), the WCTU becomes an important force in the fight for woman suffrage. Not surprisingly, one of the most vehement opponents to women's enfranchisement is the liquor lobby, which fears women might use the franchise to prohibit the sale of liquor.



Frances Willard

## 1878

A Woman Suffrage Amendment is introduced in the United States Congress. The wording is unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passes both houses.

### **\*1878\***

The Indianapolis Equal Suffrage Society, led by Zerelda Wallace and May Wright Sewall, is formed.

### **\*January 1881\***

Legislation is introduced allowing Hoosier women the right to vote in presidential elections and amending the state constitution to allow women to vote in all elections.



May Wright Sewall

### **\*March/April 1881\***

At a special legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly approves legislation amending the constitution to allow Hoosier women the right to vote.

**\*January 1883\***

Lawmakers opposed to woman’s suffrage kill and constitutional amendment passed earlier allowing the vote for women.

**\*1887\***

During discussion of a bill to allow women to vote in municipal elections, an Indiana legislator announces that if he voted for such a measure his constituents “would mob me after I went home; they don’t believe in sickly sentimentality.”



Alice Stone Blackwell

**1890**

The NWSA and the AWSA are reunited as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Alice Stone Blackwell , editor of the *Woman's Journal*, an organ of the American Woman Suffrage Association, is instrumental in merging the two groups.

**\*Fall 1894\***

Hoosier suffragist Helen M. Gougar attempts to vote in her home community of Lafayette. Unsuccessful, she sues the election board. Her case goes all the way to the Indiana Supreme Court, but the court denies her claim.

**\*1909\***

Dr. Amelia Keller and Grace Julian Clarke lead an effort to form a Woman’s School League in order to elect a woman to the Indianapolis school board.

**1911**

The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) s organized. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge, its members include wealthy, influential women and some Catholic clergymen.



**\*1911\***

Woman’s Franchise League of Indiana is formed. By 1916, the League has 60 branches and 3,000 members.



Carrie Chapman Catt

**1914**

The National Federation of Women’s Clubs, which by this time includes more than two million white women and women of color throughout the United States, formally endorses the suffrage campaign.

**1916**

NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveils her “winning plan” for suffrage victory at a convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Catt's plan required the coordination of activities by a vast cadre of suffrage workers in both state and local associations.



**\*1917\***

To mobilize support for suffrage in the Indiana General Assembly, Hoosier women create the Legislative Council of Women.



**1917**

Women win the vote in New York State. A suffrage petition signed by more than a million women signals the determination of the women of the state (and the suffrage campaign workers who gathered the signatures) to gain the vote. Aiding the suffrage cause is a last-minute decision by Tammany Hall, the powerful Democratic “machine,” not to oppose suffrage, given the danger alienating potential women voters might pose in future elections.

**1918 to 1920**

The Great War (World War I) intervenes to slow down the suffrage campaign as some—but not all—suffragists decide to shelve their suffrage activism in favor of "war work." In the long run, however, this decision proves to be a prudent one as it adds yet another reason to why women deserve the vote.



Kentucky Governor Edwin P. Morrow signing the Anthony Amendment.

**May/June 1919**

The Nineteenth Amendment passes both House and Senate in a special session and goes to the states for ratification.

**\*January 1920\***

In a special session, the Indiana General Assembly ratifies the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



**August 26, 1920**

Following ratification by the necessary thirty-six states, the Nineteenth Amendment is adopted.